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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Property Address:	<b>1328 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Shaw Historic District</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	<b>2F</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	<b>January 24, 2013</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>#13-102</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Brendan Meyer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Owners Matthew and Kim Zabrud seek concept approval for a third floor mansard addition to a 2-story flat-front rowhouse at 1328 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW in the Shaw Historic District. Plans were prepared by Richard Leggin Architects.

**Property Description and Context**

The house at 1328 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW is a two-story, flat-front brick row building with a one-story wood trimmed projecting bay. The bay, front door and roof cornice are ornamented with matching millwork consisting of medium-sized volute brackets and smaller modillions. The north side wall abuts an east-west alley so is exposed to view from 10<sup>th</sup> Street and thus shows a simple building profile consisting of flat roof and a utilitarian chimney.

The construction date of the building is uncertain, but can be approximated. No building permit record has been found, and building permit records only start to become reliable after 1877-1878. The lack of a recorded building permit, the style and type of construction, and tax assessment records indicate a likely date of construction between 1865-1875. A similar date of construction is likely for the adjacent houses at 1316, 1320, and 1326 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

Of particular interest is that these relatively early historic buildings within the historic district were often subject to alterations that may not be evident as such today. Elements such as one-story bays, mansards, and even entire facades may not be original features, but were added relatively soon after construction. For instance, projections into public space were not allowed until the Building Projection Act of 1871. Houses built before 1871 that were set at the front property line could not have projections into public space, but once the act was passed, new projections became a common addition. Repair and alteration permits from the period have not been cataloged, so are generally unavailable, but a repair permit for the neighboring property at 1326 shows that in 1891 a new façade, new third floor and new projecting bay were added to what had been a flat front, 2-story house. Similar repair permit records show that the mansard roof across the street at 1337 is also not original.

The most recent alteration to a 2-story flat-front house on this block was in 2003-2004. The Board reviewed and approved an application to add a third floor mansard to 1316 10<sup>th</sup> Street (HPA #03-554, see *Evaluation* below).

The block as a whole is a varied collection of individual historic buildings, non-contributing buildings that post-date the district's period of significance (1833-1932), and parking lots that take up multiple building lots. Building heights are varied from 2 to 3-1/2 stories and the street face is gapped.

## Proposal

The new third floor would provide approximately 850 square feet of new living space and leave the size of the first and second floors unchanged. The front mansard, of unspecified material, would rise 7'-6" above the existing cornice. The design includes three front-gable dormers aligned with the windows of the second floor. From the side, the steep pitched mansard would transition directly to a flat roof that continues back 20 feet at which point it follows the footprint of the existing rear dog-leg. The existing chimney is shown extended and altered into an ornamental, corbeled chimney at the third floor.

## Evaluation

The purpose of the Preservation Act, with respect to properties in historic districts like 1328 10<sup>th</sup> Street is, "To retain and enhance those properties which contribute to the character of the historic district and to encourage their adaptation for current use; [and to] assure that alterations of existing structures are compatible with the character of the historic district." To guide the Board in how to evaluate alterations and additions for compatibility, the Historic Preservation Regulations provide that, "The Board and the staff may also apply the Secretary's Standards in the review of projects under the Historic Protection Act. Rehabilitation that meets the Secretary's Standards shall be considered compatible with the character of a historic landmark or historic district" (DCMR 10A, Section 2003.3).

The Secretary's Standards, as interpreted and applied by the National Park Service (NPS), are definitive that adding a new historic form on an existing historic building is not a compatible alteration because it fundamentally changes the character of a building in terms of its height, scale and ornament. It creates a "false history" by changing what is now a small, relatively modest house into a larger, grander house. In explaining its interpretations, NPS stresses that the question is not one of aesthetics and attractive design, but a matter of preservation; that historic buildings are in one sense artifacts with a specific inherited character that should not be ornamented or enhanced into something they were not historically.

While NPS would most certainly interpret that this mansard addition would not meet the Secretary's Standards, Section 2003.3 of the District's preservation regulations merely *encourages* rather than *requires* conformity with the Standards: "Although conformity is encouraged, rehabilitation is not required to meet the Secretary's Standards to be considered compatible or consistent with the purposes of the Act." That distinction was utilized at 1316 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NW when the Board approved the addition of a third-story mansard there in 2003. In a series of three meetings, the Board weighed the question very carefully. From the start, the Board was concerned that to approve a mansard at 1316 10<sup>th</sup> would open the door to all small rowhouses in the historic district being expanded and losing their small-scale, working-class character. As a result the Board's first recommendation was to not allow a mansard and instead explore a set-back addition. The result was an unsuccessful design that could not avoid being seen because of an open adjacent parking lot. With the setback alternative eliminated and the question reduced to either a mansard addition or no addition, the Board ultimately approved the mansard addition. The result at 1316 10<sup>th</sup> Street is attractive and its detailing is so well-done that it has fooled even this staff reviewer as to its originality. There lies an inherent risk to the character of the historic district and why the Board should proceed with caution on the question of 1328 10<sup>th</sup>.

The nomination for the Shaw Historic District groups the 650 buildings of the historic district into three distinct building periods each with their own type of housing stock: first improvements (1830-1870), late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1870-1900) and twentieth century (1900-1940). The first period is typified by small scale, 2-story, largely working-class structures built at a time when municipal utilities were not provided in what was still a remote area of the city. Based on its simple proportions and small dimensions, 1328 10<sup>th</sup> is representative of this first period. The second period marks the transition in housing stock from working class to a Victorian professional class when municipal services like water, sewer and gas arrived; new houses were bigger and more ornamented to reflect the new affluence of the area. This period from 1870-1900 is when mansards were constructed and also when the projecting bay rowhouses took over as the predominant house type.

The character of the historic district is defined by this balance of historic house types. For every mansard added to a small house, this balance is shifted. In isolation, the effect is negligible, but if done to most of the houses of this type in the historic district the change would be widespread, significant, and irreversible. A staff survey has identified 121 of the 650 contributing buildings in the district as 2-story, flat-front masonry buildings. Of that, only 15 have mansards. If the remaining 106 two-story flat-front houses were to be altered with mansards, the working-class house type of 1830-1870 would essentially be lost as a character defining feature of the historic district. As stewards of the character of the city's historic districts, the Board has a clear interest in ensuring that there is not a widespread loss of a particular housing type or part of the historical record.

Alternative proposals for adding to the house may be limited or have drawbacks, however, they should be more fully explored. A rear addition that extends the first and second floor of the house may require zoning relief. The existing building and its garage already exceed the allowable 60% lot coverage for this zone (R-4). A third-floor setback far enough to not be visible from 10<sup>th</sup> Street would be smaller than the proposed addition and however might have some limited visibility due to the fact that the abutting alley does not block the view completely of the side and rear of the house.

Taking all aspects of the question together—the Secretary's Standards, the previous approval of a mansard at 1316 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW, the cumulative effect on the historic district if mansards continue to be approved, and the context and sightlines unique to 1328 10<sup>th</sup> Street—the HPO recommends that the Board not approve the mansard addition and recommend that the applicants develop a plan for a setback third floor addition on top of the rear wing.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for a third floor mansard addition on 1328 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW to be incompatible with its small scale, modest character, and advise the applicant to submit an alternative concept for a setback addition.*